

What Happens When You Stop Smoking...

It is never too late to quit and benefit from a smoke-free lifestyle. Even people who have smoked for decades can notice big changes within just a few minutes.

Within 20 Minutes:

- **Blood pressure drops to normal**
- **Pulse rate returns to normal**
- **Body temperature of hands and feet increases to normal**

If you are having withdrawal symptoms, drink a glass of water, suck on a mint, or keep your hands busy with something until the urge leaves. Take deep breaths to calm yourself.

Within 8 Hours:

- **Carbon Monoxide level in blood drops to normal**
- **Oxygen level in blood increases to normal**
- **Smoker's breath disappears**

It is common to feel restless at this time, so keep your hands and mind busy. Good choices are jigsaw puzzles, coins, twine or bead strands, marbles, and rubber bands.

Within 24 Hours:

- **Your chance of a heart attack decreases**

If you are out-of-sorts or snapping at family and friends, your sleeping habits may need help. Your sleep will be better and you'll be easier to get along with if you exercise daily or go for long walks.

Within 48 Hours:

- **Nerve endings start to re-grow**
- **Your ability to smell and taste is enhanced**

If you experience strong cravings, rely on your support person and use your coping strategies. Keep drinking plenty of water to flush toxins. Use your list of reasons for quitting by reviewing them often. **Reward yourself for quitting!**

Within 72 Hours:

- **Bronchial tubes relax making it easier to breathe**
- **Lung capacity increases making it easier to do physical activities**

If you are tense and nervous, practice your deep breathing exercises. Be sure to set aside time for rest and relaxation.

Within Two Weeks – Three Months:

- **Circulation improves**
- **Walking becomes easier**
- **Lung function increases up to 30%**

If you are worried about weight gain, pick foods that are low in fat, sugar and salt. Go for a 10-minute walk 3 or more days a week. Start an exercise program you can live with.

Within One to Nine Months:

- **Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decrease**
- **Your body's overall energy level increases**
- **Cilia re-grow in lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean lungs, reduce infection**

You may still have cravings during this time. Keep up your exercise program. Continue to review your reasons for quitting. Reward yourself for successes. Learn to **use coping strategies** and plan ahead for future smoking triggers.

Within One Year:

- **Risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker**

This is a **milestone** and should be celebrated. You will have fewer urges at this stage, but keep using your coping skills to help with triggers.

Within Two Years:

- **Heart attack risk drops to near normal**

This is another milestone and should be celebrated with your online support group and your loved ones. Urges may be gone, but remember that many people relapse because they forget that **just one puff leads back to a pack a day**.

Within 5 Years:

- **Lung cancer death rate for average pack-a-day smoker decreases by almost half**
- **Stroke risk is reduced**
- **Risk of mouth, throat and esophageal cancer is half that of a smoker**

Take pride in being a non-smoker. Enjoy your health!

Within 10 Years:

- **Lung cancer death rate is similar to that of a person who does not smoke**
- **Pre-cancerous cells are replaced**

Continue to celebrate your smo-briety and take pride in what you have done to become a non-smoker. Always stay on alert for hidden triggers.

Within 15 Years:

- **Risk of coronary heart disease is the same as a person who has never smoked**

Celebrate your success!